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United States Department of Agriculture.

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOOD.

The following statements relative to the agricultural interests of the submerged districts of the Mississippi Valley south of Cairo, Ill., are derived from a study of the chart just prepared under the direction of the Chief of the Weather Bureau:

POPULATION OF FLOODED DISTRICTS.

The total area under water on April 10 was about 15,800 square miles, of which 7,900 square miles was in Mississippi, 4,500 square miles in Arkansas, 1,750 square miles in Missouri, 1,200 in Tennessee, and 450 in Louisiana. This region contained in 1890, so far as can be determined in view of the somewhat indefinite boundary lines of the flood, a population of 379,685, of which 186,489, or about one half, was in Mississippi, 100,235 in Arkansas, and the remainder almost equally divided between Missouri and Tennessee. Taking the entire region, the colored population outnumbered the whites in the proportion of 12 to 7, the colored predominating in the flooded districts of Mississippi in the ratio of more than 5 to 1 and in Arkansas in that of 2 to 1. In Missouri and Tennessee the population of the flooded districts is largely white; in the former State in the proportion of 10 to 1 and in the latter in that of 2 to 1.

FARMS AND ACREAGE.

The flooded districts contain, it is estimated, about 39,500 farms, of which about 18,500 are in Mississippi, nearly 10,000 in Arkansas, and a like number about equally divided between Missouri and Tennessee. These farms contain a total area of about 3,800,000 acres, one-half of which is in Mississippi and rather over one-fourth in Arkansas, the proportions in Missouri and Tennessee being about the same as in the case of the number of farms. The total value of these farms, with their improvements, farm implements, etc., is close upon $65,000,000, and here, also, the proportions in the different States are about the same as above noted.

The total number of acres improved at the taking of the last census was about 2,000,000, and about 1,500,000 acres were last year devoted to cotton and corn, to which crops nearly 95 per cent of the entire acreage cultivated is devoted. The live stock on hand the 1st of January of the present year was valued at over $7,500,000, divided in very much the same proportions as other farm property. It is estimated that of the crops of last year over $3,750,000 worth remained on hand in the submerged region on the last of the month, cotton representing about two-thirds of this amount and corn practically all the remainder.

LOSS IN MISSISSIPPI, ARKANSAS, MISSOURI, AND TENNESSEE.

Mississippi.—The largest interests at stake so far are those of the State of Mississippi, whose flooded districts represent an invested capital in agriculture alone of close upon $42,000,000. Over 18,000 farms, containing 2,000,000 acres of land, of an average value of about $18 an acre, are under water in the country lying between the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers, including some of the most productive lands of the State. Their live stock even at the present low prices is worth nearly $3,500,000, and the farmers and planters are estimated to have about $2,000,000 worth of the crops of last year still on hand.

Arkansas.—This State stands next in the extent of its imperiled interests, nearly 10,000 farms, containing 1,000,000 acres of land, worth over $14,000,000, being submerged. These farms contain live stock to the value of over $1,500,000, and crops unsold and unconsumed to the value of nearly $900,000, the entire agricultural interests of these lands representing a value not far short of $17,000,000.

Missouri.—The agricultural interests affected in Missouri represent a total capital of rather over $9,000,000, the 5,300 submerged farms containing an area of about 470,000 acres, worth about $7,125,000, the live stock representing nearly $1,500,000 more, and the crops on hand another half million.

Tennessee.—This State is not far behind Missouri in the extent of its imperiled interests, the number and acreage of the submerged farms being very nearly the same, and the entire value, including $1,125,000 for live stock and $400,000 for crops on hand, being rather over $8,500,000.

EFFECT ON THIS YEAR'S PRODUCTION.

What effect the flood will have upon the crops of the present season depends upon the length of its continuance and the practicability of cotton planting after the subsidence of the flood. The entire region under water on April 10 produced last year about 370,000 bales of cotton, valued at close to $13,000,000; over 11,000,000 bushels of corn, worth about $3,400,000, and wheat, oats, potatoes, and hay worth over $800,000 more. The most valuable portion of these crops was raised in Mississippi, whose region, now submerged, produced nearly a quarter

of a million bales of cotton, besides other products mostly for local consumption.

The counties wholly or partially submerged are among the largest cotton-producing counties in the United States. Yazoo County, which alone has produced over 50,000 bales in a season, is one-half under water, while Bolivar County, Coahoma, Issaquena, Washington, with a productive capacity of 100,000 bales, and other famous counties are partially submerged.

CONDITION OF THE WATER.

The flood water now in western Mississippi is just beginning to return to the Mississippi River through the Yazoo, at a point just north of Vicksburg. It is expected that this flood will pass into the Mississippi between the mouth of the Yazoo and Millikens Landing, a few miles to the north. The gradually increasing strain expected during the next few days on the Louisiana side, opposite the place where the Yazoo floods return to the Mississippi, renders it possible that levees may break and the flood pour through into northeastern Louisiana, in which case it is probable that much, if not all, of the area in Louisiana formerly covered by floods will be flooded again this year. Heroic work is now being done on the levees of northern Louisiana, and it is hoped that they will be held intact.

The following table furnishes data which will be of interest at this time:

Data as to stage of water at four river points.

Stations.	Danger line.	Highest water and date.	Stage of water April 10, 1897.
	Feet.		*Feet.*
Cairo, Ill	40	51.6 feet on March 25–28	48.8
Memphis, Tenn	33	37.1 feet on March 19–21	36.0
Vicksburg, Miss	41	50.2 feet on April 10	50.2
New Orleans, La	16	17.9 feet on April 10	17.9

On the accompanying chart of the Mississippi Valley south of Cairo, the areas now covered by flood waters are indicated by shading in oblique crossed lines and the areas which have been inundated at some previous time of flood are indicated by shading in oblique lines inclined to the left.

COUNTIES SUBMERGED OR PARTIALLY SUBMERGED APRIL 10, 1897.

The following is a list of the counties submerged and partially submerged April 10, 1897, as closely as could be ascertained from the map furnished by the Chief of the Weather Bureau:

ARKANSAS: *Submerged*—Crittenden, Lee, Mississippi, Phillips. *Partially submerged*—Clay (one-sixth), Craighead (one-third), Cross (one-third), Desha (one-fifth), Greene (one-fifth), Monroe (one-half), Poinsett (one-third), St. Francis (three-fifths).

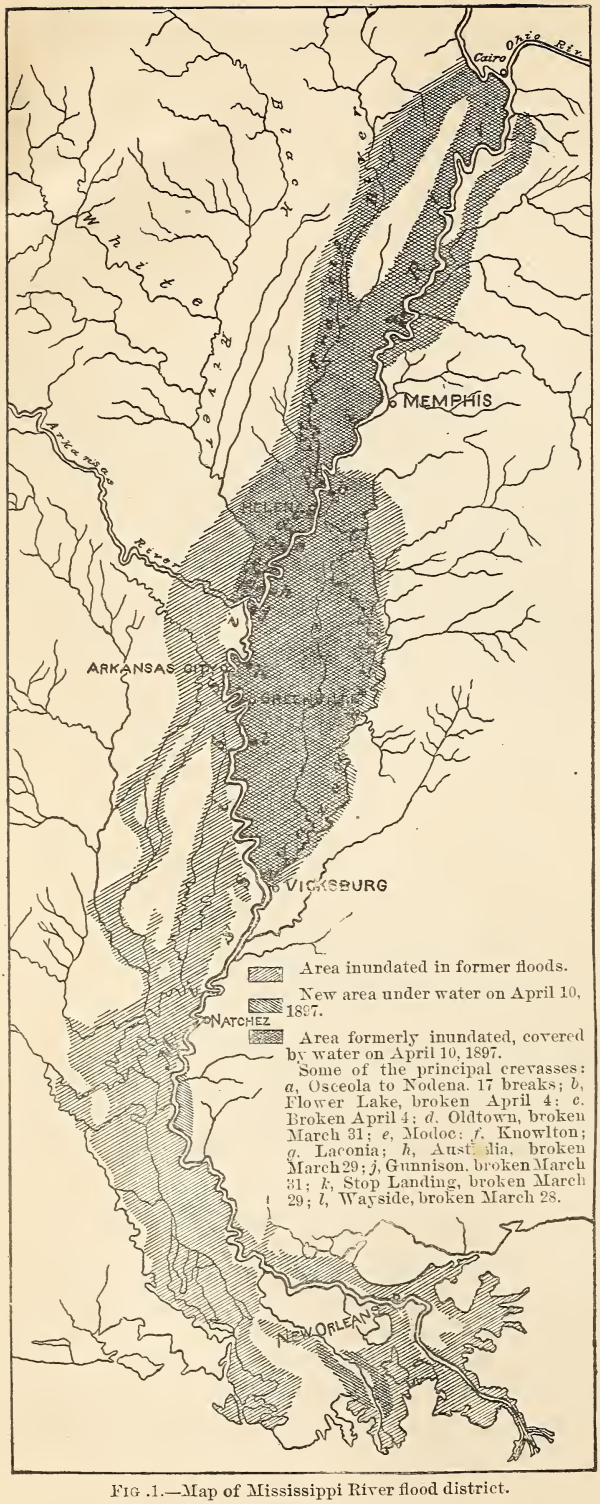
Cairo
Ohio River
Mississippi River
White River
Arkansas River
MEMPHIS
HELENA
ARKANSAS CITY
GREENVILLE
VICKSBURG
NATCHEZ
NEW ORLEANS
Area inundated in former floods.
New area under water on April 10, 1897.
Area formerly inundated, covered by water on April 10, 1897.
Some of the principal crevasses: a, Osceola to Nodena, 17 breaks; b, Flower Lake, broken April 4; c, Broken April 4; d, Oldtown, broken March 31; e, Modoc; f, Knowlton; g, Laconia; h, Australia, broken March 29; j, Gunnison, broken March 31; k, Stop Landing, broken March 29; l, Wayside, broken March 28.

FIG. 1.—Map of Mississippi River flood district.

MISSISSIPPI: *Submerged* — Bolivar, Coahoma, Issaquena, Leflore, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Washington. *Partially submerged*—Holmes (one-third), Tallahatchie (one-half), Tunica (one-half), Wilkinson (one-third), Yazoo (one-half).

MISSOURI: *Submerged* — Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot. *Partially submerged*—Scott (one-fifth), Stoddard (one-fourth).

TENNESSEE: *Submerged* — Lauderdale. *Partially submerged* — Dyer (one-half). Obion (one-third), Tipton (one-third).

FARM PROPERTY LIABLE TO DAMAGE.

The accompanying tables, prepared under the direction of the Statistician, contain an estimate of the amount of farm property liable to damage in the flooded districts of the Lower Mississippi River.

Table No. 1 shows the estimated population of the flooded district, by color.

Table No. 2 contains the estimated number of farms, the total number of acres, the acres improved, and the acreage under the principal crops in 1896.

Table No. 3 shows the estimated capital invested.

Table No. 4 shows the quantities and values of the principal farm products raised in the flooded territory in 1896.

As the Division of Statistics makes no estimates of crops by counties, the proportions existing between the counties in the flooded districts and the total for the State during the census year have been presumed to be correct for the present period, and have been used in making these estimates.

TABLE No. 1.—*Population of flooded territory, 1890.*

	Arkansas.	Mississippi.	Missouri.	Tennessee.	Total.
White	36,235	29,519	42,244	30,351	138,349
Colored	64,000	156,970	4,844	15,522	241,336
Total population	100,235	186,489	47,088	45,873	379,685

TABLE No. 2.—*Number and acreage of farms submerged April 10, 1897.*

	Arkansas.	Mississippi.	Missouri.	Tennessee.	Total.
Number of farms	9,893	18,557	5,367	5,371	39,188
Number of acres in farms	1,005,231	1,940,815	468,872	462,283	3,877,201
Number of acres improved	447,001	965,711	302,547	244,565	1,959,824
Acreage under principal crops in 1896:					
Cotton	232,834	600,419	51,109	70,748	955,110
Corn	127,024	183,544	150,303	73,068	533,939
Hay	11,524	7,354	11,190	8,359	38,427
Wheat	838	.....	14,066	17,788	32,692
Oats	3,445	1,213	3,476	3,755	11,889
Potatoes	1,340	716	1,996	399	4,451
Total acreage under principal crops	377,005	793,246	232,140	174,117	1,576,508

TABLE No. 3.—*Capital invested.*

	Arkansas.	Mississippi.	Missouri.	Tennessee.	Total.
Value of farms and improvements	$13,755,860	$34,967,268	$6,894,159	$6,569,693	$62,186,980
Value of implements, etc	503,126	1,415,396	352,250	333,690	2,604,462
Cost of fertilizers	2,737	18,990	860	1,482	24,069
Value of live stock on hand Jan. 1, 1897:					
Horses	365,195	537,527	209,426	330,384	1,442,532
Mules	574,677	1,835,207	202,431	215,709	2,828,024
Milch cows	217,015	351,987	300,098	162,295	1,031,395
Other cattle	217,123	358,194	513,315	177,726	1,266,358
Sheep	7,232	8,439	4,368	6,261	26,300
Swine	163,173	334,994	218,345	373,070	1,089,582
Total value of live stock	1,544,415	3,426,348	1,447,983	1,265,445	7,684,191
Value of crops on hand March 1, 1897:					
Cotton	667,417	1,464,723	37,566	142,380	2,312,086
Corn	206,889	564,993	430,919	222,554	1,425,355
Wheat	836	.....	20,756	24,484	46,076
Oats	3,930	972	3,829	4,994	13,725
Total value of crops on hand	879,072	2,030,688	493,070	394,412	3,797,242
Total capital invested	16,685,210	41,858,690	9,188,322	8,564,722	76,296,944

TABLE NO. 4.—*Quantities and values of the principal farm products raised in the flooded territory in 1896.*

	Arkansas.		Mississippi.		Missouri.		Tennessee.		Total.	
	Production.	Value.	Production.	Value.	Production.	Value.	Production.	Value.	Production.	Value.
Crops of 1896:										
Cotton.....bales..	90,805	$3,178,175	246,172	$8,616,020	15,333	$536,655	17,687	$619,045	369,997	$12,949,895
Corn.....bushels..	1,803,740	667,384	2,918,350	1,284,074	4,584,242	916,848	1,892,461	529,889	11,198,793	3,398,195
Wheat.....do....	5,363	3,808	.....	.....	174,418	122,093	165,428	122,417	345,209	248,318
Oats.....do....	55,123	17,088	15,769	6,938	62,568	10,637	61,958	16,109	195,418	50,772
Potatoes.....do....	79,060	41,902	50,120	31,074	155,688	48,263	24,738	9,895	309,506	131,134
Hay.....tons..	13,483	101,662	9,928	93,919	16,002	77,610	11,703	113,168	51,116	386,359
Total value of crops.....	.....	4,010,019	.....	10,032,025	.....	1,712,106	.....	1,410,523	.....	17,164,673
Live stock raised in 1896: *	*Number.*		*Number.*		*Number.*		*Number.*		*Number.*	
Horses foaled.....	1,381	15,011	1,222	17,841	676	7,848	817	14,363	4,096	55,063
Mules foaled.....	335	4,650	263	4,626	218	3,353	314	6,324	1,130	18,953
Calves dropped.....	11,174	39,332	16,983	54,346	8,645	81,782	6,826	29,557	43,628	205,017
Lambs dropped.....	2,147	2,126	2,033	2,236	713	1,070	1,522	1,750	6,415	7,182
Total value of live stock.....	.....	61,119	.....	79,049	.....	94,053	.....	51,994	.....	286,215
Total value of crops and live stock.....	.....	4,071,138	.....	10,111,074	.....	1,806,159	.....	1,462,517	.....	17,450,888

* As all live stock in the above table must be less than one year old, the average value is necessarily low.

CHAS. W. DABNEY, Jr.,
Special Agent in Charge of Scientific and Statistical Work.

Approved:
JAMES WILSON, *Secretary.*
WASHINGTON, D. C., *April 12, 1897.*